

Gastling

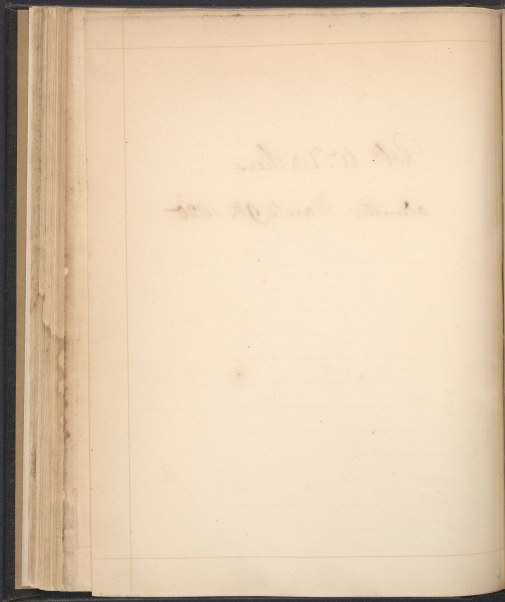
Robt. W. Withers

admitted March 9th 1820

Robert W. Withers

at Mrs Oldens, No 1 Filbert Street

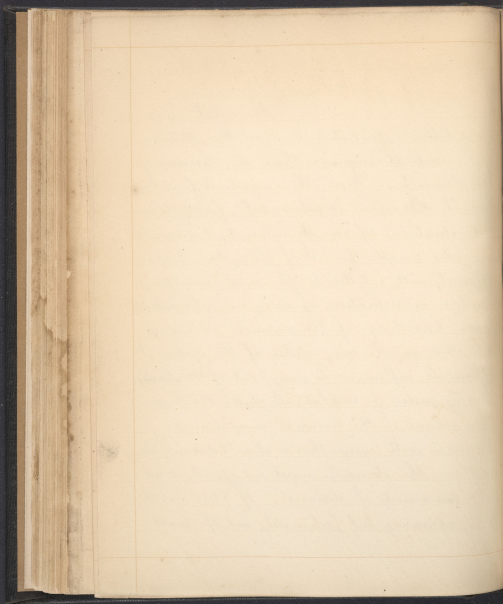
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of Gastritis. —

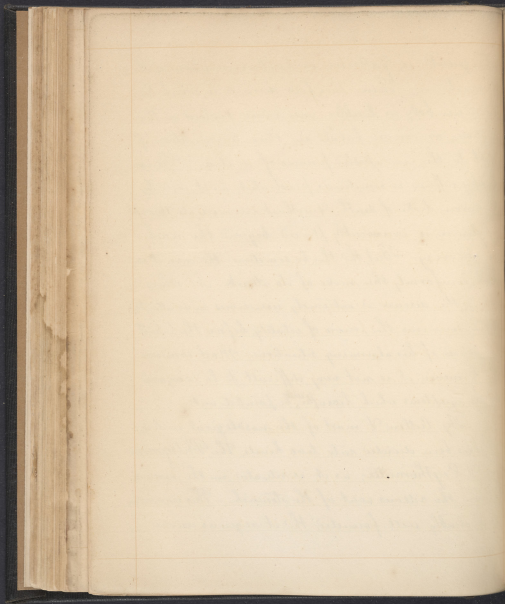
No subject, is perhaps, better calculated to arrest the attention of a medical inquirer, than the diseases of the stomach. — From the important functions to which this organ is subservient — from its central situation — & from its intimate, & diversified connections, with the rest of the system, it is very deservedly well entitled to the most particular, & attentive consideration, of every one, who pretends to any knowledge of the animal economy. Situated in the very centre of the system, it diffuses its influence to every part of the body; & may indeed be emphatically styled, the "punctum saliens" of the animal machine. —

Endowed with sympathies so close & diversified as these, the stomach must necessarily be subjected to a variety of diseases. — Of these not the least alarming, but fortunately, not the most



frequent, is, Gastritis, or inflammation of the stomach. — Then this, few diseases to which the human body is liable, are more violent in their nature, or more fatal in their termination, if left to the unassisted powers of nature. — The unhappy sufferer is sometimes prostrated as it were, by the sudden stroke of death, & without immediate prompt assistance, is irrevocably placed beyond the reach of recovery. But tho' this be sometimes the case, it is not uniformly the mode of its attack. At other times, the disease is extremely insidious in its attack, & undermines the powers of vitality, before the patient is aware of his alarming situation. Most commonly however, it is not very difficult to be recognised by the symptoms which hereafter, ^{will} be pointed out. —

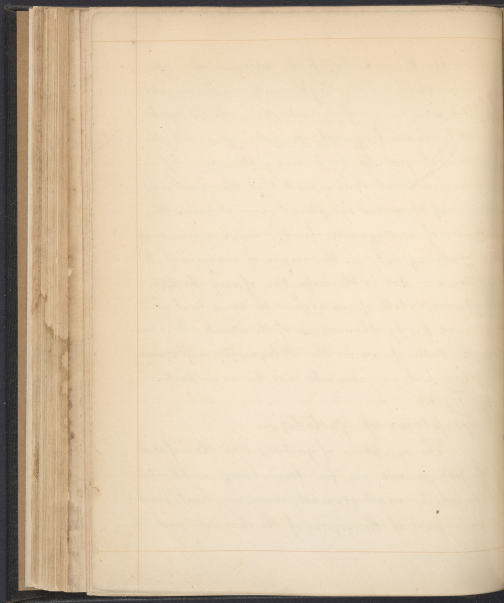
By Cullen, & most of the nosological writers, it has been divided into two kinds, The Phlegmonie, & Erythematie; as it is situated in the nervous, or in the villous coat of the stomach. — This division is probably well founded, tho' it requires more



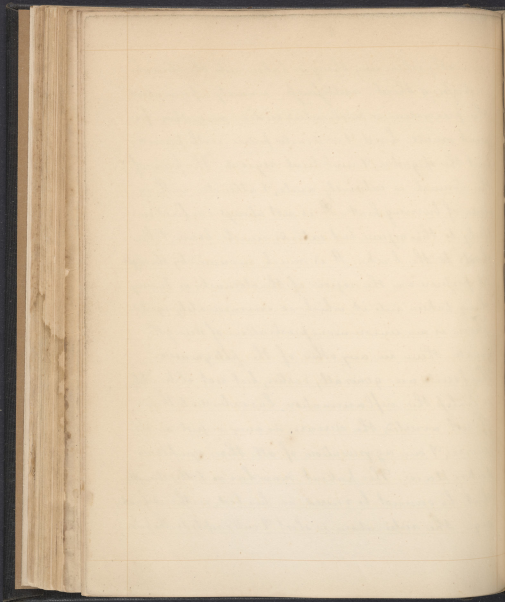
knowledge than we possess to discriminate certainly between them. The Erythematic inflammation is said to occur more frequently than the Phlegmonous - to be more frequently unaccompanied by the symptoms of gastritis - or to evince them in a less violent degree. But it is evident, that the greater or less violence of the same symptoms, cannot serve the purposes of a diagnosis; for the same disease might occur, differing only in the degree of violence of its symptoms. - Nor is the distinction of any essential importance, as both species require the same treatment, only modified by the violence of the attack. It is however the latter species, or the Phlegmonous inflammation, to which our remarks will be more particularly directed.

Symptoms of Gastritis.

The symptoms of gastritis, like those of most of the phlegmasias, are far from being complicated. Those which most generally occur, are, acute pain in some part of the region of the stomach - vomiting,

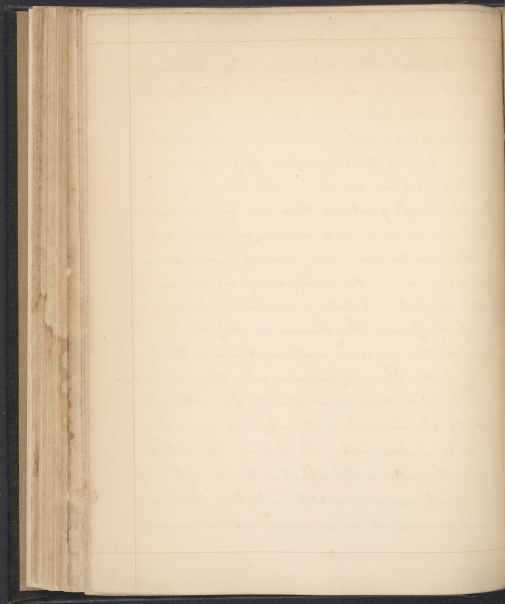


especially when any thing is taken into the stomach
 distressing thirst—restlessness—anxiety—pain about
 the precordia or scrobiculus cordis—singultus—fre-
 quent small, hard, & contracted pulse with pain a-
 bout the epigastrium, & umbilical regions. The pain of
 the stomach is extremely acute, & attended with a
 sense of burning heat. It is not always confined en-
 tirely to this organ, but extends much lower, & often
 shoots to the back. It is much increased by the slight-
 est pressure on the region of the stomach, or by any
 thing taken into it, which is immediately rejected. X
 There is an uncommon prostration of strength,
 greater than in any other of the phlegmasiae.
 The bowels are generally costive, but not obstinate,
 so, unless the inflammation has extended to them.
 If not avverted, the disease is very rapid in its
 course, & an aggravation of all these symptoms
 takes place. The patient now, has so little strength
 that he cannot be raised in his bed, without faint-
 ing—the respiration is short & interrupted—the pulse



pulse & intermitting— the extremities cold, & covered with clammy sweats— hiccough, & a discharge of black matter takes place. The whole abdomen is greatly distended with wind, which indicates the approach, or actual presence of gangrene. —

Besides these, which are the more regular symptoms of gastritis there are some anomalies, which are denominated delirious symptoms, as pain in the great toe, resembling that of podagra— in the groin— or in the pudenda of women, in which latter case it is fatal in proportion to the intensity of the pain. The disease is also attended with hydrophobia in some instances, & also with a horror of light. These symptoms, when they exist some sufficiently to distinguish gastritis from other affections of the stomach, with which it is most liable to be confounded. In spasms, & flatulent pains, the pulse is less affected— the strength is not so suddenly, nor so completely prostrated— the vomiting is not so constant, nor so readily excited by ingesta.

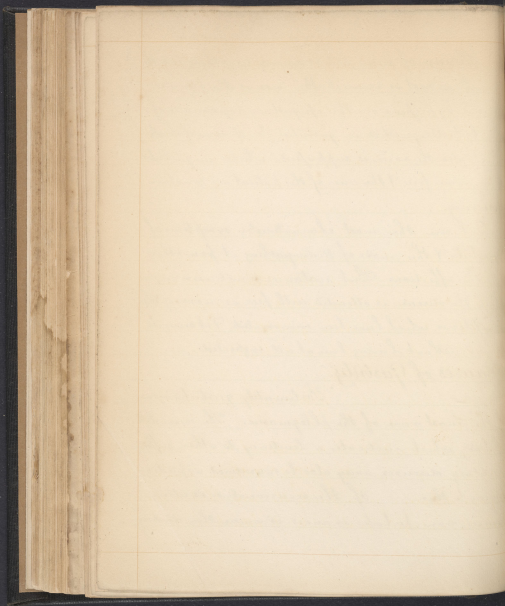


the increase of pain on receiving any thing into the stomach, is not so remarkable - nor is the pain increased by pressure on the epigastric region, one of the best diagnostics in gastritis. In spasms of the stomach also, the voice is suppressed, while in gastritis it is more free, & the cries of the patient are sometimes piercing. -

Such are the most characteristic symptoms of gastritis, & the mode of distinguishing it from other similar affections. But instances sometimes occur, in which the disease is attended with few, or none, of the symptoms which have been enumerated, & it runs its course, without having been at all suspected. -

Causes of Gastritis. -

Fortunately, gastritis is one of the most rare of the phlegmasiae. The same state of body which indicates a tendency to other inflammatory diseases, may also be considered as predisposing to this. - Of the occasional, or exciting causes, none perhaps is more common than drinking



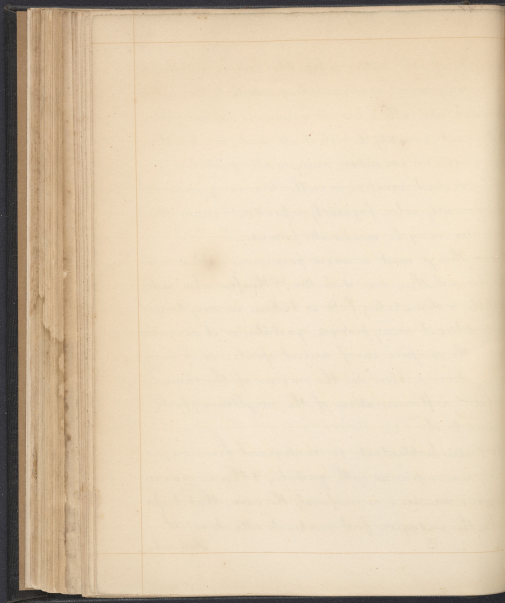
largely of cold water, while the body is much heated. ✓

Any acid, or stimulating article, taken into the stomach, especially when its mucus is not secreted in sufficient quantity, to protect its coats, or when it is in a irritated condition, may excite gastritis. ✓

Very violent emetics, or cathartics may occasion it, especially when frequently repeated, & under this head also may be enumerated poisons. —

Two things exert a more pernicious influence on the stomach, than over distention, & therefore when indigestible or stimulating food is taken in very large quantities, it may produce gastritis; or it may arise from the excessive use of ardent spirits — or it may arise from a blow on the region of the stomach, or from inflammation of the neighbouring parts, spread to it. — ✓

Certain febrile or malignant fevers, are generally accompanied with gastritis, & this in some contagious diseases, is so uniformly the case, that it is probable, the contagion first makes its attack on the stomach, ✓



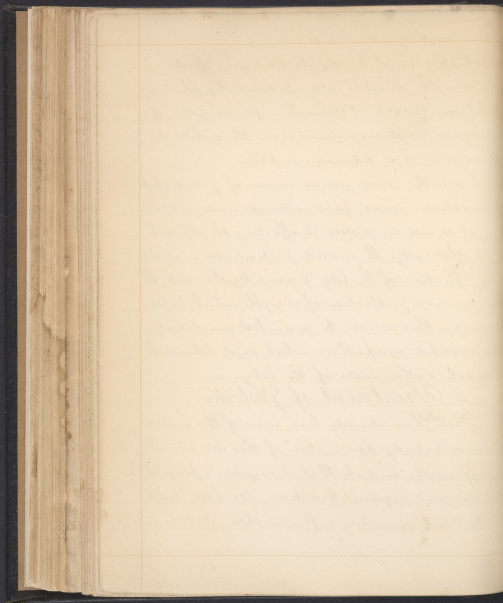
perpetrating on it locally its deleterious effects.

From the direct & intimate sympathy which exists between the skin & stomach, inflammation of this organ sometimes supervenes, or the sudden disappearance of a cutaneous eruption.

Such are the more usual causes of gastritis, but it sometimes arises from internal causes, which are not so well understood, & affecting the stomach sympathetically. It indeed participates in almost every affection of the body, & serves, together with the uncommon prostration of strength which takes place in this disease, to manifest conclusively, the powerful sympathies which exist between the stomach, & other parts of the body. —

Treatment of Gastritis. —

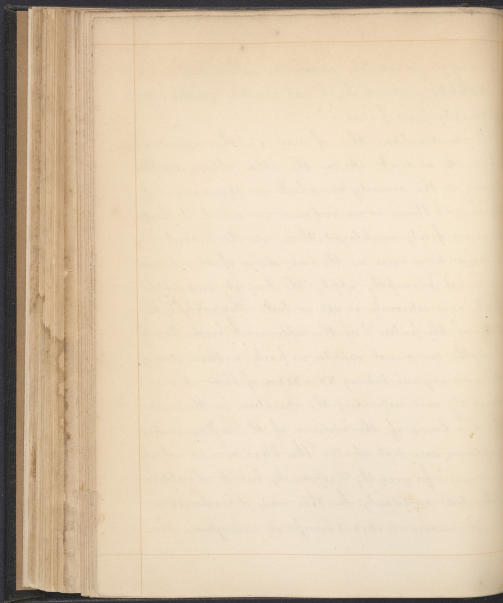
From ^{what} has already been said, of the nature, violence, & speedy termination, of this disease, it is sufficiently evident, that it requires a prompt, decided, and vigorous practice. We have here to contend with an active inflammation, seated in



an organ peculiarly endowed with vitality, and irritability, and which, if not speedily arrested, will certainly prove fatal. -

The indications then, of cure in this disease are sufficiently evident. As in the other plegmatic blood letting is the remedy on which we place our chief reliance; & there is no instance, in which it should be more freely employed, than in the present.

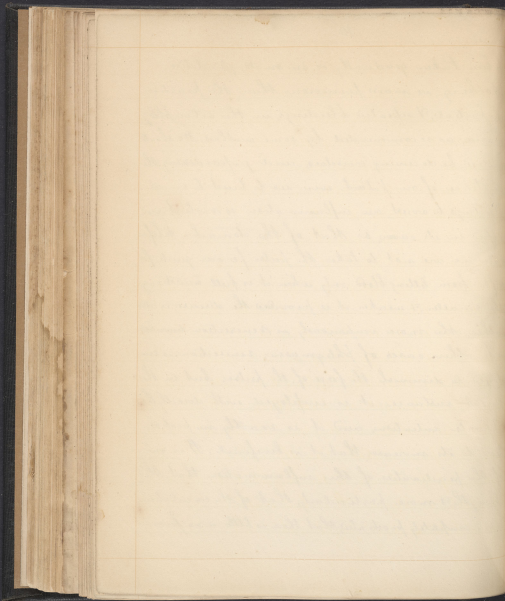
Called to a case in the early stage of this disease, we must promptly apply the lancet, and deplete freely, and copiously, or all is lost. Regardless of the state of the pulse, & of the apparent prostration of strength, we must deplete as freely, as the nature of the case requires, taking XX or XXXoz of blood at one bleeding, and repeating the operation in the course of a few hours, if the violence of the inflammatory symptoms, does not abate. The blood should not only be drawn frequently & copiously, but it should be abstracted suddenly. In this way it produces a much more decided, & beneficial impression, than



when taken gradually, or in small quantities.

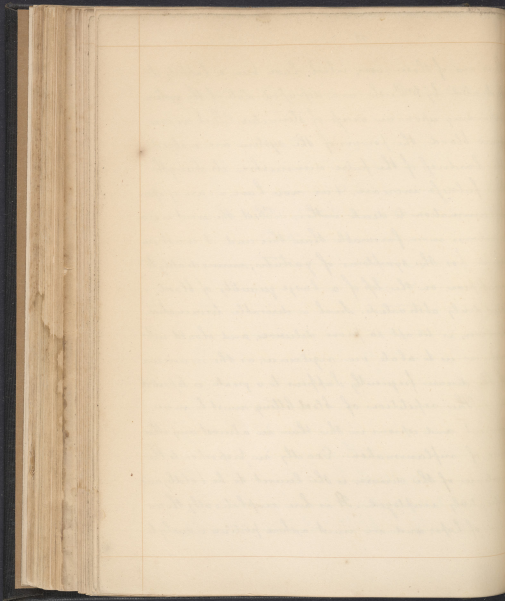
Nothing is more pernicious than the practice of partial, & repeated bleedings, in the active phlegmasia, as recommended by some authors. We should indeed be deceiving ourselves, and jeopardizing the existence of our patient, were we to trust to small bleedings to arrest an inflammation so violent and rapid in its course, as that of the stomach. As before stated, we are not to take the pulse for our guide, for so far from letting blood only when it is full and strong, the smaller, & weaker it is, provided the disease is idiopathic, the more imperiously is resection demanded.

In other cases of phlegmasia, resection is employed to diminish the force of the pulse; but in the present instance, it is employed with directly the opposite intention, and it is exactly in proportion to its increase, that it is beneficial. It is one of the peculiarities of this inflammation, that the strength, & more particularly, that of the circulation, is so completely prostrated, that there is little or no fever.



It is one of those cases, which have been so happily illustrated by Dr. Rush, as a deputed state of the system depending upon an excess of stimulus. But as we draw blood, the powers of the system are evoked, the hardness of the pulse diminishes its strength, and fulness increase, & we now have, a case of open inflammation to deal with. But the event is even sometimes more favourable than this, and it is not unusual for the symptoms of gastritis, immediately to disappear, on the loss of a large quantity of blood, suddenly abstracted. Such a desirable termination however, is too apt to prove delusive, and should not induce us to abate our vigilance; as the recurrence of the disease frequently happens to a greater or less extent.

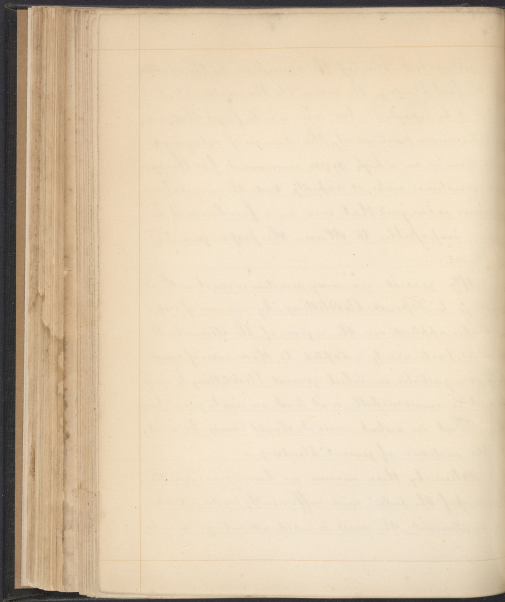
The repetition of blood letting, must be more frequent and copious, in this than in almost any other cure of inflammation. Exactly in proportion to the violence of the disease, is the lancet to be boldly, and repeatedly employed. It is here emphatically the anchor of hope, and we must adhere pertinaciously to



it, or all is lost. The less the remission in the symptoms after the first bleeding, the sooner & to the greater extent must it be repeated. Nor ever let us forget, that in gastritis more particularly, the danger of delaying resection, is in a high degree imminent, for the system sometimes sinks so rapidly, and the circulation becomes so languid that even in a few hours, it becomes impossible, to obtain the proper quantity of blood.

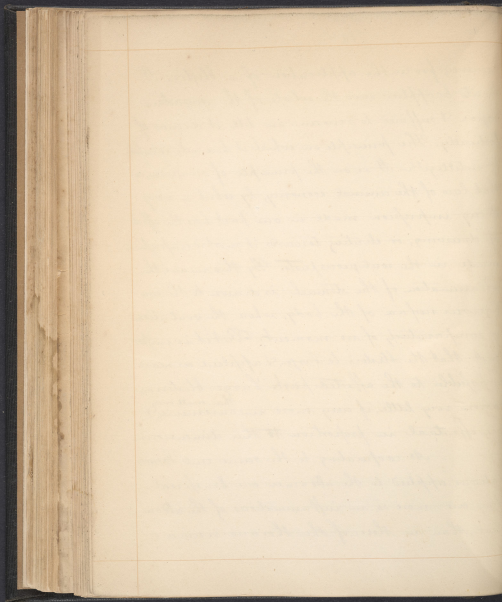
After general, we may sometimes resort with advantage to Topical bloodletting, by means of cups or leeches applied over the region of the stomach. It is more particularly adapted to those cases of symptomatic gastritis, in which general bloodletting to any extent is inadmissible, or at least an ambiguous practice. But in violent cases it should never be used to the exclusion of general bleeding. -

When by these means we have overcome the hardness of the pulse, and sufficiently reduced arterial excitement, the most decided advantage, may be



derived from the application of a blister. It should be applied over the whole of the epigastric region, & suffered to remain on till it draws off febrilely. The principle on which it here acts, is ^{not} perfectly intelligible. It is on the principle of scurbsion, or that law of the animal economy, by which a very strong impression made in one part has the effect of drawing, or eliciting towards it, morbid impression made in the contiguous parts. By this means, the inflammation of the stomach is drawn to the contiguous surface of the body, where the irritation is comparatively of no moment. But it is important that the blisters be large, & applied as near as possible to the affected parts. Large blisters occasion very little, if any more inconvenience, ^{than small ones,} & are effectual in proportion to their dimensions.

As cooperating to the same end, Tomentous, applied to the abdomen are beneficial. They are more so, in inflammations of the abdominal, than in those of the thoracic viscera.

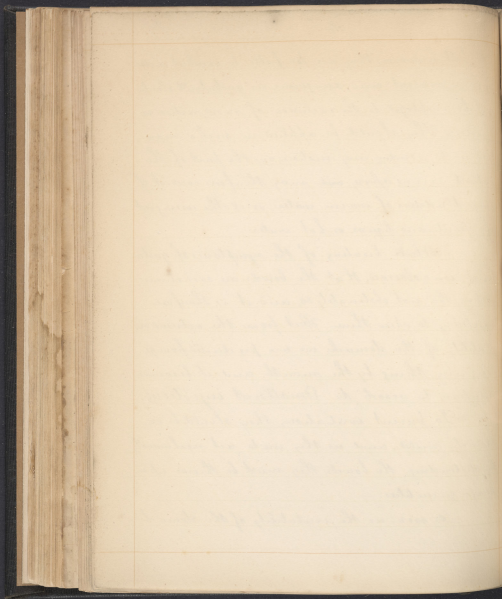


At best however, they are too feeble to combat a disease so violent and dangerous, as gastritis, & should not be employed to the exclusion of more active remedies. They should be applied in such a manner as to render any motion on the part of the patient unnecessary, and may therefore consist of large bladders of warm water, or cloths impregnated of spirituous liquors, or hot water.

While treating of the symptoms of gastritis, it was observed, that the bowels are sometimes costive, tho' not obstinately so, and it is therefore necessary to open them. But from the extreme irritability of the stomach, we are precluded from giving any thing by the mouth, and it becomes necessary to resort to Emollient injections.

To prevent irritation, they should be extremely mild, and as they are to act mechanically by distending the bowels, they must be thrown up in large quantities.

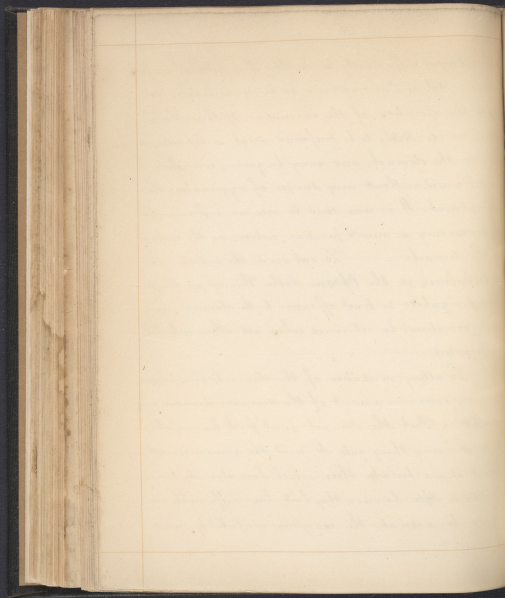
As soon as the irritability of the stomach



inflammation, the best remedy is lime water and milk, combined and given in small quantities frequently repeated. This may be aided, by large anodyne injections. They soothe pain, abate the irritability, and induce general composure. —

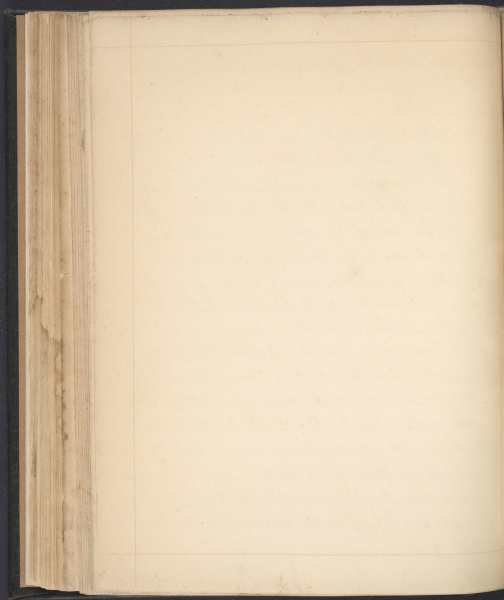
At this period, we may expect the most beneficial effects from the Warm Bath. Its effects after the free use of the depurating remedies, are generally most decidedly advantageous, by inducing perspiration giving the disease a centrifugal direction, and rendering the situation of the patient, altogether more comfortable. —

To remove as much as possible, the urgent thirst, with which the patient is tormented, nothing answers so well, as milk, given in small quantities now at short intervals. We should, by all means, guard against administering large quantities of demulcent drinks, which by over-distending the stomach, produce vomiting, & leave the patient exceedingly. A small quantity of milk, toast and water, some



is allayed, sufficiently to enable it to retain any thing. Oil, or Calomel, are to be administered, to assist the operation of the enemata. Of these, the calomel is decidedly to be preferred, as it is less disagreeable to the stomach, and may be given, even while it is inflamed, without any danger of aggravating the complaint. It is even said to remove inflammation by producing a new & peculiar action, on the surface of the stomach. — To calomel, the article next to be preferred, is, the Epsom Salts. This, of all the saline purgatives, is least offensive to the stomach, and will sometimes be retained, when all other articles are rejected. —

To allay irritation of the stomach should form the very commencement of the disease, demand our attention. But the stomach is at first too irritable to receive any thing into it, and the remedies most effectual, are perhaps those which have already been mentioned. After however they have been sufficiently employed to moderate the excessive irritability, and



mild acidulous drinks, will be much more effectual in allaying thirst and irritability, than the largest quantities of demulcent drinks.—

When however the occurrence of gangrene is apprehended, Spirits of Turpentine, in large doses, must be resorted to.—

Such then, as have been detailed are those remedies for gastritis, arising from ordinary causes. But after all venesection, and blisters, are the remedies most to be relied on.— By the interruption of the lancet, in the early stage of the disease, and the subsequent application of a large blister, over the epigastric region, we shall most commonly triumph over this most alarming disorder.—

